Sermons of Rev. Donald D. Morris

Introductory Note
As a lifelong member of the United Methodist Church, I created this webpage to preserve and share the sermons of Rev. Donald D. Morris (ddmorris401@gmail.com), now a retired minister of the Holston Conference of the UMC. Rev. Morris previously served congregations at First UMC in Mountain City, Tennessee; Trinity UMC in Athens, Tennessee; Kingston UMC in Kingston, Tennessee; and Kern Memorial UMC in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

My father, Stan Cook, was a parishioner and friend of Rev. Morris during his ministry at Kingston UMC. Dad often told me that Rev. Morris's thought-provoking sermons were the best he had ever heard. Later, I was able to experience many of these sermons myself when Kern Memorial UMC published recordings on its website. Listening to them, I quickly understood why my father held them in such high regard—the sermons were always marked by insight, candor, exploration, and humility.

Because these recordings are no longer available through the Kern Memorial UMC website, I developed this page so that others may continue to benefit from the preaching of this brilliant, thoughtful, and humble student of Jesus Christ. If you are seeking to explore how the teachings of Jesus can be relevant to your life today, I encourage you to listen to these sermons. If your experience is like mine, one sermon will lead you back again and again.

I am deeply grateful to Kern Memorial UMC for initially making these recordings available, and to Rev. Morris for granting permission to preserve and post his sermons online. In granting me permission to post his sermons, Rev. Morris emphasized that his sermons should be viewed as provisional explorations—subject to critique and revision— documenting a mind in the process of attempting to think for himself. Correspondingly, a primary aim of his preaching was to invite and stimulate the further reflection of his listeners.

Finally, I dedicate this project—memorializing the sermons of Rev. Donald D. Morris—to the memory of my father, who first told me about him.
—John C. Cook

Sermon Index

[For a downloadable PDF sermon list with the text of each scriptural reference click here]

Date	**Title**	**Scripture Reference**

June 10, 2018	much madness, divinest sense	First Corinthians 4:13-5:1: Mark 3:20-35
June 3, 2018	the shaking the foundations	Mark 2:23-3:6
May 27, 2018	Trinity: an effort at demystification	Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-16
May 20, 2018	the conditions of the possibility of Holy Spirit	Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26-27, 16:4-15
May 13, 2018	[sermon title unknown]	First John 5: 9-13; John 17:6-19
May 6, 2018	disciples, students, friends	First John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17
April 29, 2018	keeping current with Jesus--if you're interested	First John 4:7-21; John 15:1-11
April 22, 2018	hating other Christians for the love of God?	First John 3:16-24
April 15, 2018	The canonical Jesus, the theological Jesus, or Jesus himself	First John 3: 1-7; Luke 24: 36-48
April 8, 2018	the human face of God?	First John 1:1-4; John 20:19-23
April 1, 2018	resurrection and tradition et moi	First Corinthians 15:1-8; John 20:1-10
March 11, 2018	good news concerning the good news	Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21
March 4, 2018	from crucifixion to cause célèbre	First Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22
March 11, 2018	good news concerning good news	Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3: 14-21

March 25, 2018	the death of Jesus: history or theology	The Passion Narrative
February 25, 2018	an invitation to death and life	Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38
February 11, 2018	transfiguration demystified	Second Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9
February 4, 2018	the protean Paul, or the apostle of freedom	First Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39
January 28, 2018	the qualifications of loyalty, part 4: working	First Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28
January 21, 2018	the qualifications of loyalty, part 3: giving	Mark 1:14-20
January 14, 2018	the qualifications of loyalty, part 2: being here	First Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
January 7, 2018	the qualifications of loyalty, part 1: care	Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11
December 31, 2017	on the possibility of a secular Christianity	Matthew 25:31-46
December 24, 2017	the irony of Christmas	Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38
December 10, 2017	the Advent state of mind	Peter 3:8-15; Mark 1:1-8
December 3, 2017	perpetually awaiting a renaissance of wonder	First Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
November 19, 2017	the conservative temperament: pros and cons	Matthew 25:14-30
November 12, 2017	contingency and spirituality	Matthew 25:1-13

October 29, 2017	Jesus as the Christ, or Jesus versus the Christ?	Matthew 22:34-46
October 22, 2017	or that which belongs to the self	Matthew 22:15-22
October 15, 2017	preference and consequence	Matthew 22:1-14
October 8, 2017	the auspicious arrival of the Son: sublime strategy or tragic miscalculation?	Matthew 21:33-46
October 1, 2017	the impenetrable mystery of changing one's mind	Matthew 21:23-32
September 24, 2017	reflections on time and grace	Matthew 20:1-16
September 17, 2017	the problematics of grace	Matthew 18:21-35
September 10, 2017	on the (questionable) limits of ecclesiastical patience	Matthew 18:15-20
September 3, 2017	the dilemma of life and its highly paradoxical resolution	Matthew 16:21-28
August 27, 2017	the keys to the kingdom	Matthew 16:13-20
August 20, 2017	the inadvertent humanization of Jesus	Matthew 15: 21-28
July 30, 2017	the scribal element in Christian spirituality	Matthew13:31-33, 44-52
July 23, 2017	"the seduction of final solutions" or "Matthew's dystopian vision?"	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 16, 2017	the everlasting suspension of final meaning	Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
July 9, 2017	the highly ironic revelation of Jesus Christ	Matthew 11:25-30
July 2, 2017	on repaying one's teacher badly	Matthew 10: 24-42
June 18, 2017	song of innocence, song of experience	Matthew 9:35-10:8
June 11, 2017	complicating the great commission	Matthew 28:16-20
May 28, 2017	on the Christian mode of being on one's own in the world	John 17:1-11
May 21, 2017	and the Word became words?	John 14:15-21
May 14, 2017	the day of realization	John 14:1-14
May 7, 2017	the pastoral center of theological attention	John 10:1-11
April 30, 2017	a peripatetic Easter seminar	Luke 24: 13-35
April 23, 2017	the surreptitious arrival of the Holy Spirit	John 20:19-31
April 16, 2017	a pedigogical path to the Risen Christ?	John 20:1-18
April 9, 2017	Ecce Homo or the quest for the human Jesus	Matthew 26:14-27
March 26, 2017	the ambiguity of perspicacity or in the midst of light and darkness	John 9:39-41

March 19, 2017	the quest for spiritual self-sufficiency	John 4:5-15
March 12, 2017	the Gospel of Lent, or beginning in the middle	John 3:1-17
March 5, 2017	temptation demythologized	Matthew 4:1-11
February 26, 2017	Jesus untransfigured	Matthew 17:1-9
February 19, 2017	the resistance of non-resistance, or, love as strategy	Matthew 5:38-48
February 5, 2017	Matthew's controversially conservative Jesus	Matthew 5: 12-20
January 29, 2017	meta-beatitude?	Matthew 5:1-11
January 22, 2017	when the student is ready...	Matthew 4:12-23
January 15, 2017	come and see: thoughts on the variety of discipleship	John 1:29-42
January 8, 2017	unbaptizing Jesus!	Matthew 3:13-17
January 1, 2017	naming, renaming, and un-naming Jesus	Luke 2:15-21
December 25, 2016	the birth vs. the life of Jesus?	Matthew 1:18-25
December 4, 2016	the least in the kingdom of heaven, or 'toward a mature relationship to authority'	Matthew 3:1-12
November 27, 2016	coping with contingency or leaning toward nirvana	Matthew 24:36-44

November 20, 2016	Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum, vs. 'the Lamb upon the throne	Luke 23:33-43
November 13, 2016	on the (oh so obviously) human voices of divine deliverance	Luke 21:5-19
November 6, 2016	the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob---and Harvie Branscomb?	Luke 20:27-38
October 30, 2016	deliverances and renunciations	Luke 19:1-10
October 16, 2016	before the law	Luke 18:1-8
October 9, 2016	transcendent gratitude	Luke 17:11-19
October 2, 2016	Jesus vs. St. Benedict	Luke 17: 5-10
September 25, 2016	the unpersuadables	Luke 16:19-31
September 11, 2016	the catholic spirit: how catholic?	Luke 15:1-10
September 4, 2016	the native hue of resolution vs. the pale cast of thought	Luke 14:25-33
August 28, 2016	the paradox of place	Luke 14:1,7-14
August 21, 2016	interpreting interpretation	Luke 13:10-17
August 14, 2016	on the way to court	Luke 12:49-56
August 7, 2016	the rose of Angelus Silesius	Luke 12:32-40
July 31, 2016	retiring to the forest?	Luke 12:13-21
July 17, 2016	naming the Ultimate Concern	Luke 10:38-42

July 10, 2016	Saint Augustine's question	Luke 10:25-37
July 3, 2016	(heavenly) treasure in earthen vessels	Luke 10:1-11, 16
June 26, 2016	an irresistible call to depart	Luke 9:51:57-62
June 19, 2016	the risk of engagement	Luke 8:26-39
June 5, 2016	on getting one's life back	Luke 7:11-17
May 15, 2016	the human face of God	John 14:8-17; 25-27
May 8, 2016	trinity or quaternity?	John 17:20-26
May 1, 2016	plenitude of the present	John 14:23-29
April 24, 2016	the Jesus legacy	John 13:1-5
April 17, 2016	faith and (prevenient?) belonging	John 10:22-30
April 10, 2016	the interrogations of grace	John 21:1-19
April 3, 2016	reflecting upon the gospel reflecting upon itself, or evangelical credibility	John 20:19-31
March 27, 2016	reading resurrection	John 20:1-18
March 20, 2016	near the fire	Luke 19:28-40
March 13, 2016	a thing of beauty, a joy forever	John 12:1-8
March 6, 2016	worldly grace	Luke 15: 1-3, 11-33

February 28, 2016	the fierce urgency of now	Luke 13:1-9
February 21, 2016	passersby	Luke 13:31-35
February 14, 2016	a continuous Lent?	Luke 4:1-13
February 7, 2016	transfiguration, transmogrification, transvaluation	Luke 9:28-43
January 31, 2016	commission (Part 2): Go, my songs	Luke 4:21-30
January 24, 2016	commission (Pt 1)	Luke 4:14-21
January 17, 2016	water pots and wine skins	John 2:1-11
January 10, 2016	epiphany without baptism?	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 3, 2016	one holy, catholic, apostolic [and heterogenous] Church	Matthew 2:1-12
December 27, 2015	the scandal of particularity?	Luke 2:41-52
December 20, 2015	letting Jesus be Jesus	Luke 1:31-35
December 13, 2015	thinking greatly, erring greatly?	Luke 3:7-18
December 6, 2015	more than a prophet	Luke 3:1-6
November 29, 2015	to know or not to know	Luke 21:25-36
November 22, 2015	interrogating the interrogation	John 18:33-37
November 15, 2015	when things fall apart	Mark 13:1-8
November 1, 2015	resuscitation, resurrection, or renascence?	John 11:32-44

October 25, 2015	bar Timean blindness	Mark 10:46-52
October 18, 2015	the prize of the high calling	Mark 10:35-45
October 11, 2015	having nothing, possessing everything	Mark 10:17-31
October 4, 2015	prelapsarian marriage in a postlapsarian world	Mark 10:2-16
September 27, 2015	vital impetus (élan vital)	Mark 9:38-50
September 20, 2015	servants, lords, and lordly servants	Mark 9:30-37
September 13, 2015	an ablative estate	Mark 8:27-38
September 6, 2015	he that hath ears	Mark 7:24-37
August 30, 2015	the Word beyond words	Mark 7:1-8
August 23, 2015	hard sayings, hard questions, hard work	John 6:56-69
August 16, 2015	in search of holy communion	John 6:51-58
August 9, 2015	above, below, and in between	John 6:35; 41-51
August 2, 2015	the Johannine sacrament, or the bread of life	John 6:24-35
July 26, 2015	understanding bread, or the bread of understanding	John 6:1-21
July 19, 2015	bread and stone: reflections upon the care of souls	Mark 6:30-34;53-56

July 12, 2015	the death and resurrection of John the Baptist	Mark 6:14-29
June 28, 2015	if they didn't laugh: reflections on the skepticism of faith	Mark 5:21-43
June 21, 2015	seminar on the sea	Mark 4:35-41
June 14, 2015	between seedtime and harvest	Mark 4:26-34
June 7, 2015	Much Madness is divinest Sense-	Mark 3:20-35
May 31, 2015	in defense of a Nicodemean spirituality	John 3:1-17
May 3, 2015	vitality	John 15:1-8
April 26, 2015	the God of love my shepherd is	John 10:11-18
April 19, 2015	the closing of the religious mind	Luke 24:36-48
April 12, 2015	if the thought in you arises *the word of the Master is ended*	John 20:19-31
April 5, 2015	making sense of Resurrection	John 20:1-18
March 29, 2015	the last question	Mark (the passion narrative)
March 22, 2015	a condition of complete simplicity (costing not less than everything)	John 12:20-33
March 8, 2015	the scared knowledge of death	John 2:13-22

March 1, 2015	at the heart of the text at the heart of Lent	Mark 8:31-38
February 22, 2015	a reasoned humility	Mark 1:9-15
February 15, 2015	the humanity of God?	Mark 9:2-9
February 8, 2015	an itinerant mind	Mark 1:29-39
January 25, 2015	henceforward	Mark 1:14-16
January 18, 2015	archetypical epiphany	John 1:43-51
January 11, 2015	the paradox of epiphany	Mark 1:4-11
January 4, 2015	grass roots ecumenicity	Matthew 2:1-12
December 14, 2014	poets light but lamps	John 1:6-10; 19-28
December 7, 2014	the beginning of the beginning	Mark 1:1-8
November 23, 2014	left, right, and center	Matthew 25:31-46
November 16, 2014	the irony of faith	Matthew 25:14-30
November 2, 2014	perennial students?	Matthew 23:1-12
October 26, 2014	What Jesus thought about what was thought about Jesus	Matthew 22:34-46
October 19, 2014	Jesus and the Fourth Philosophy	Matthew 22:15-22
October 5, 2014	the love song of Jesus of Nazareth	Matthew 21: 33-46
September 28, 2014	the question of the question of authority	Matthew 21: 23-32
September 21, 2014	the stages of life	Matthew 20:1-16
September 7, 2014	order - but not too much	Matthew 18:15-20

August 31, 2014	day by day, hour by hour	Matthew 16:21-27
August 24, 2014	Blest order,...	Matthew 16:13-20
August 17, 2014	faith and xenophobia	Matthew 15:21-28
August 3, 2014	parables of eating, or eating parables	Matthew 14:13-21
July 20, 2014	non-apocalyptic solutions to insuperable problems	Matthew 13:24-30
July 13, 2014	the parable of the parable	Matthew 13:1-19;18-23
June 29, 2014	little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness	Matthew 10:40-42
June 22, 2014	servants, disciples, friends, ---scribes?	Matthew 10: 24-39
June 15, 2014	the doubt in honest faith	Matthew 28:16-20
June 1, 2014	from the words of Jesus to the language of the Spirit	John 17:1-11
May 25, 2014	love, and be silent	John 14: 15-21
May 18, 2014	the difference a preposition can make	John 14:1-14
May 11, 2014	becoming voice	John 10:1-10
May 4, 2014	burning hearts	Luke 24: 13-25
April 27, 2014	faith and distance	John 20: 19-31
April 20, 2014	making sense of the Resurrection	Matthew 28:1-10
April 13, 2014	yet	Matthew 27: 11-54
April 6, 2014	In Praise of Darkness	John 11:1-45

March 30, 2014	through a glass darkly	John 9: 1-41
March 23, 2014	the piety of inquiry (Pt. 2)	John 4: 5-42
March 16, 2014	the piety of inquiry (Pt. 1)	John 3:1-17
March 9, 2014	temptation demythologized?	Matthew 4:1-11
March 2, 2014	from the sermon on the mountain to the mountain of transfiguration	Matthew 17:1-9
February 23, 2014	Love - thou art high	Matthew 5:38-48
February 16, 2014	dead poets, philosophs, priests...	Matthew 5:21-37
February 9, 2014	between Jesus and the bible	Matthew 5:13-20
February 2, 2014	Christ against culture	Matthew 5:1-12
January 26, 2014	disciples at second-hand	Matthew 4:12-23
January 19, 2014	come and see	John 1:29-42
January 12, 2014	the (exceptionally) unexceptional Jesus	Matthew 3:13-17
January 5, 2014	east and west in the kingdom of God	Matthew 2:1-12
December 29, 2013	in a village called Nazareth	Matthew 2:13-23
December 15, 2013	the 'long-expected Jesus'? or an Advent beatitude	Matthew 11:2-11
December 8, 2013	John's gift to Advent	Matthew 3: 1-12
December 1, 2013	of that day and hour	Matthew 24: 36-44

November 24, 2013	Christ the King vs. Christ Crucified	Luke 23:13-43
November 17, 2013	when your leaders say, 'the kingdom of God is...'	Luke 21:5-19
October 27, 2013	to rejoice in the tents of prosperity	Luke 18:9-14
October 13, 2013	the atheist of Centerville" or "the Doug Bates theory of a happy life”	Luke 17:11-19
October 6, 2013	perfectly free lord of all, subject to none; perfectly dutiful servant of all	Luke 17:5-10;
September 29, 2013	the unexamined life	Luke 16:19-31
September 15, 2013	Savior, like a shepherd lead us	Luke 15:1-10
September 8, 2013	'cheap grace' or 'the cost of discipleship'	Luke 14: 25-33;
September 1, 2013	Communion Meditation	Luke 14:1, 7-14
August 25, 2013	the sum of all reverence	Luke 13:10-17
August 18, 2013	things fall apart; the center cannot hold	Luke 12:40-56
August 11, 2013	on the question of being understandable	Luke 12:32-40
August 4, 2013	death's question	Luke 12:13-21
July 28, 2013	antidote to prayer	Luke 11:1-13
July 21, 2013	infinite concern	Luke 10:38-42

July 14, 2013	how do you read?" and "what do you think?	Luke 10:25-37
July 7, 2013	the high calling	Luke 10:1-11;16-20
June 30, 2013	song of the open road	Luke 9:51-62
June 23, 2013	the finger of God	Luke 8: 26-39
May 12, 2013	disciples at second-hand	John 17: 20-26
April 28, 2013	a religion of love alone?	John 13:31-35
April 7, 2013	central peace subsisting at the heart/of endless agitation	John 20:19-30
March 24, 2013	constantly risking absurdity and death	Luke 23:1-49
March 10, 2013	if I were holy...	Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32
March 3, 2013	the arrows of death	Luke 13:1-9
February 24, 2013	highest of feasts on the way to freedom	Luke 13:31-35
February 17, 2013	the temptation of glorification	Luke 4: 1-13
February 10, 2013	the big questions	Luke 9:28-36
January 27, 2013	the picnic	Luke 4:14-21
January 20, 2013	the taste of new wine	John 2:1-11
January 13, 2013	the only wisdom we can hope to acquire	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 6, 2013	spots of time/that with distinct preeminence retain/a renovating virtue	Matthew 2:1-12

January 1, 2012	such a long journey	Matthew 2:1–12
January 8, 2012	not to the highest but to the lowest	Mark 1:4–11
January 15, 2012	the un-willing suspension of disbelief	John 1:43–51
January 22, 2012	stage by stage to wider spaces	Mark 1:14–20
February 12, 2012	[title not available]	Mark 1:40–45
February 19, 2012	till oft converse with heavenly habitants begins to cast a beam on outward shape	2 Corinthians 3:4–4:4
February 26, 2012	the first temptation of Christ	Mark 1:9–15
March 4, 2012	the great turning	Mark 8:31–38
March 11, 2012	a temple not made with hands	John 2:13–22
March 18, 2012	as the sun falling round a helpless thing	John 3:14–21
April 1, 2012	high superfluousness	Mark 14:3–9
April 8, 2012	the living among the dead	Mark 16:1–8
April 15, 2012	the Jesus who keeps saying I am Jesus	Matthew 28:1–10
April 22, 2012	apostolic doubt	Luke 24:36b–48
April 29, 2012	living, dying, and being damned	John 10:11–18
May 6, 2012	Roman Fountain	John 15:1–8

May 13, 2012	perfectly free lord of all, subject to none; perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all	John 15:12–17
May 20, 2012	the world is too much with us or not with us, enough	John 17:6–19
May 27, 2012	until a flash of unforeseen remembrance falls on what has been	John 15:26–27
June 3, 2012	ode to the west wind	John 3:1–8
July 1, 2012	when a foolish man hears of the Tao	Mark 5:21–24, 35–43
July 8, 2012	he who travels far	Mark 6:1–6
July 15, 2012	darker than knowledge but lighter than ignorance	Mark 6:6–7, 12–17
July 29, 2012	footnote to a ‘miracle’	John 6:14–15
August 5, 2012	getting the better of words for the thing one no longer has to say	John 6:24–35
August 12, 2012	taught by—God?	John 6:35, 41–51
August 26, 2012	eating words	John 6:56–69
September 2, 2012	out of the slimy mud of words / out of the sleet and hail of verbal imprecisions	Mark 7:1–8
September 9, 2012	subject to the same diseases, by the same means	Mark 7:24–30

September 16, 2012	a different wisdom	Mark 8:27–38
September 23, 2012	fear of the question	Mark 9:30–37
October 7, 2012	to infancy, O Lord, again I come	Mark 10:13–16
October 14, 2012	just one more thing	Mark 10:17–22
October 28, 2012	in praise of darkness	Mark 10:46–52
November 4, 2012	house of questions	Mark 12: 28-34
November 11, 2012	extreme poverty or wealth of liberality	Mark 12:38–44
November 18, 2012	round the decay of that colossal wreck	Mark 13:1–2
November 25, 2012	the glorias and gentle rule	John 18:33
December 2, 2012	the precious life-blood of a master spirit	Luke 21:25–36
December 9, 2012	the Word without a word	Luke 3:1–6
December 23, 2012	to set so high a value on a word	John 1:1-14